

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: WSS Sewer Project- Land Use License
Proposed Implementation Date: April 2017
Proponent: Sandry Construction
Location: Section 13, T09N, R06E
County: Meagher County
Trust: Common Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Sandry Construction is proposing to install 2 temporary roads to acquire access to the WSS wastewater lagoons for hauling materials to a stockpile site in order to update WSS Sewer Lagoon facilities. The proposal requests authorization, through the issuance and approval of a land use license, to strip existing topsoil with a motor grader and run haul truck over the resulting, temporary haul route. Topsoil will be stockpiled and replaced over the haul roads which will be re-seeded per DNRC requirements (seed mix and rate). Total length of the road segments to be cleared, utilized and re-claimed is 2,163 feet by 30 feet wide. Total acres of disturbance total ~1.5 acres of classified grazing State Trust.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Agencies, Groups or Individuals Scoped:	Purpose/Method/Response:
DNRC, Landowner	Landowner -Neutral
Sandry Construction	Contractor to the Proponent - in favor of the project
Town of White Sulphur Springs	Proponent is in favor of the project
Scott Mikesell	Lessee/adjacent landowner

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

DNRC is not aware of other government agencies with jurisdiction. The proponent is responsible to obtain any necessary permits.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Proposed Action Alternative: Issue the Land Use License as proposed

No Action Alternative: Not issuing the Land Use License

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

According to the NRCS Web Soil Survey existing soils are: Bigsandy loam soils (86.1%) and Beaverton-Turner complex(13.9%).

Both of these soil types are moderately suited for haul roads. Using the two temporary roads to haul solid contents of lagoon bottom will result in temporary and minimal ground disturbing activities. Standard LUL stipulations will address road maintenance, rehabilitation and weed control requirements.

Proposed Action Alternative: No lasting impacts to fragile, compactable, or unstable soils or any unusual geologic features are anticipated.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the geology or soil characteristics would occur.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

Impacts to the water quality, quantity and distribution would be minimal since material hauling will occur on the temporary routes. Little or no water resources are present. Standard LUL stipulations would address reclamation.

Proposed Action Alternative: No direct or cumulative impacts to water quality are anticipated as a result of the proposed action.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the water quality, quantity, and/or distribution will occur.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

In general, this area is considered to be of high quality air standards with good ventilation and would not be affected by the proposal.

Proposed Action Alternative: Short duration increases in dust from hauling will occur. Minimal direct or cumulative effects are expected to occur to air quality as a result of the proposed action.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to air quality will occur.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program lists 1 plant species of concern, 0 potential species of concern, and 0 special status species within T9N R6E. The plant species of concern is commonly known as Autumn Willow. There are no known occurrences of this plant species in the project area.

Proposed Action Alternative: Temporary disturbances to plant communities may occur. These vegetative communities would not be permanently altered. No lasting impacts to rare plants or cover types are anticipated within the project area.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the vegetation cover, quantity, and/or quality will occur.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

Due to the proximity to the town of White Sulphur Springs, this tract is rarely used by a variety of wildlife, including ungulates (mule deer, whitetail deer, and pronghorn), small to large sized predators (weasels, skunks, red fox, and coyotes), numerous species of small mammals (mice, voles, ground squirrels, rabbits, etc.), various raptors (red-tailed hawks, golden eagles, bald eagles, American kestrels, prairie falcons, etc.), and numerous non-game bird species (a wide variety of migrant and resident bird species associated with available habitats). The proposed project would temporarily displace these wildlife species.

Proposed Action Alternative: Temporarily disturbances may occur during the proposed project duration. No lasting impacts to terrestrial, avian, and/or aquatic life and/or habitats are anticipated.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to terrestrial, avian, and/or aquatic life and habitats will occur.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program lists 5 animal species of concern in T9N R6E: (Great Blue Heron, Sage Brush Swallow, Greater Sage Grouse, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, and the Western Pearlshell (mollusk); 0 potential species of concern; 1 special status species (bald eagle) within this township. The area wildlife would be affected by temporary displacement during proposed project. The project area encompasses no general or core habitat for the Greater Sage Grouse. No known occurrences of any of these animal species occur within the project area. The proximity of residences, businesses, the existing sewer facilities, etc. associated with the town of White Sulphur Springs does not foster or promote suitable wildlife habitat.

Proposed Action Alternative: Temporarily disturbances may occur during the proposed project duration. No lasting impacts to unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources habitats are anticipated.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources will occur.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

The Department Archaeologist was consulted in regards to this project. A Class III intensity level cultural and paleontological resources inventory was conducted of the area of potential effect on state land. Despite a detailed examination, no cultural or fossil resources were identified and no additional archaeological or paleontological investigative work is recommended. The proposed project will have *No Effect to Antiquities* as defined under the Montana State Antiquities Act. A formal report of findings has been prepared and is on file with the DNRC and the Montana State Historic Preservation Officer.

Proposed Action Alternative: No impacts to historical, archeological, and/or paleontological resources are anticipated due to the scope and nature of this project.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to historical, archeological, and/or paleontological resources will occur.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

The proposed project area represents a typical rural community found in this geographic area in Meagher County, Montana. The project would have minimal impacts to the area's aesthetics. Noise and dust increases would occur during the project similar to other farming and ranching and/or gravel pit operations in the area. These impacts would cease as soon as the project is completed. The benefits of upgraded sewer facility fully compensate for temporary impacts to aesthetics.

Proposed Action Alternative: No impacts to the aesthetics are anticipated.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the aesthetics will occur.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

The area does not contain limited resources. Nearby activities consist mostly of farming and ranching operations.

Proposed Action Alternative No impacts to the demands of environmental resources such as land, water, air, and/or energy resources are anticipated.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the demands of environmental resources such as land, water, air, and/or energy resources will occur.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

DNRC is not aware of other plans or projects in the area.

Proposed Action Alternative: No impacts to studies, plans, and/or projects pertinent to this area are anticipated to occur.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to studies, plans, and/or projects will occur.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i>• <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i>• <i>Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i> |
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14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

The proposed project would create human health and/or safety risks associated with construction activities pertinent to the sewer facility upgrade including deepening and lining the existing sewer lagoons.

Proposed Action Alternative: Sandry Construction is responsible to identify and mitigate the risks associated with the project activities.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to human health and/or safety risks will occur.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

Proposed Action Alternative: No lasting impacts to industrial, commercial and agricultural activities/production are anticipated.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to industrial, commercial and agricultural activities/production will occur.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

The project would be completed in a relatively short time frame and it would not create permanent jobs.

Proposed Action Alternative: No lasting impacts to quantity and distribution of employment are anticipated.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to quantity and distribution of employment will occur.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

Proposed Action Alternative: The project would not have any measurable effects to local or state tax revenues.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the state tax base and/or tax revenues will occur.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

Proposed Action Alternative: The proposal would not have any impacts on traffic or government services.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to traffic, road uses, or government services will occur.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

DNRC is not aware of other plans or projects in the area.

Proposed Action Alternative: No impacts to local environmental plans and goals are anticipated occur.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to local environmental plans and goals will occur.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

Legal, public access does exist to this parcel of state land in Section 13 by county road. This parcel is directly adjacent to the town of White Sulphur Springs-hunting and fishing opportunities do not exist or are rare. The existing sewer facility does not encourage typical recreational opportunities.

Proposed Action Alternative: The proposed action is not expected to impact general recreational and wilderness activities on this state tract.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the quality of recreational and wilderness activities will occur.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

The proposal does not include any changes to housing or developments.

Proposed Action Alternative: The proposal does not include any changes to housing or developments. No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the density and/or distribution of population and housing will occur.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Proposed Action Alternative: No impacts to the areas social structures, native/traditional lifestyles, or communities are anticipated to occur.

No Action Alternative: No impacts social structures, native/traditional lifestyles, or communities will occur.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

Proposed Action Alternative: No impacts to the areas cultural uniqueness and/or diversity are anticipated to occur.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the areas cultural uniqueness and/or diversity will occur.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

Proposed Action Alternative: Use of the temporary road segments is not expected to result in cumulative, adverse effects from this proposed road use. The project will cause temporary disturbances. The proponent will be required to only operate within the road prisms in order to avoid additional disturbance. Standard LUL stipulations regarding road maintenance, reclamation, and noxious weed control will appear in the license as listed below. Compliance with these stipulations will be monitored by DNRC staff. The following special stipulations will appear in the land use license:

- A pre-use and post-use inspection of the trail and road condition will be performed by DNRC staff so the temporary road segments will be put back into pre-use condition by the licensee.
- The licensee will be required to save existing topsoil and use it to reclaim the temporary roads.
- Ruts resulting from hauling by Sandry Construction will be fixed by the licensee as soon as soil conditions allow.
- Reseeding will be required of the licensee regarding areas of disturbance. The required seed mix will be determined by DNRC.

- Equipment will be washed before entering state land to prevent the spread of noxious weeds. The licensee will post-treat the temporary road on state land for noxious weeds.
- Hauling of material will occur within the identified, established road prisms only.
- Damage to improvements such as fences, cattle guards, etc. will be repaired at the licensee's expense.

The proposed project would allow access across state land on temporary roads temporarily encumbering approximately 1.5 acres of state trust land. Compensation to the trust beneficiary would total of \$400.00 one-time only. This total is equal to fees required by the REMB fee schedule regarding similar projects on the Central Land Office. This Land Use License should not impact future uses or income potential to this tract of state trust land.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the social and economic circumstances will occur.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Andy Burgoyne	Date: April 2017
	Title: HU Manager	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Proposed Alternative – Approve Sandry Construction's application for a Land Use License to install 2 temporary roads accessing the WSS wastewater lagoons, located on state land, in order to haul materials to a stockpile site for the purpose of updating the WSS Sewer Lagoon facilities. Total length of the road segments to be cleared, utilized and re-claimed is 2,163 feet by 30 feet wide. Total acres of disturbance total ~1.5 acres of classified grazing State Trust. Compensation to the trust beneficiary would total of \$400.00.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

No significant impacts are anticipated.

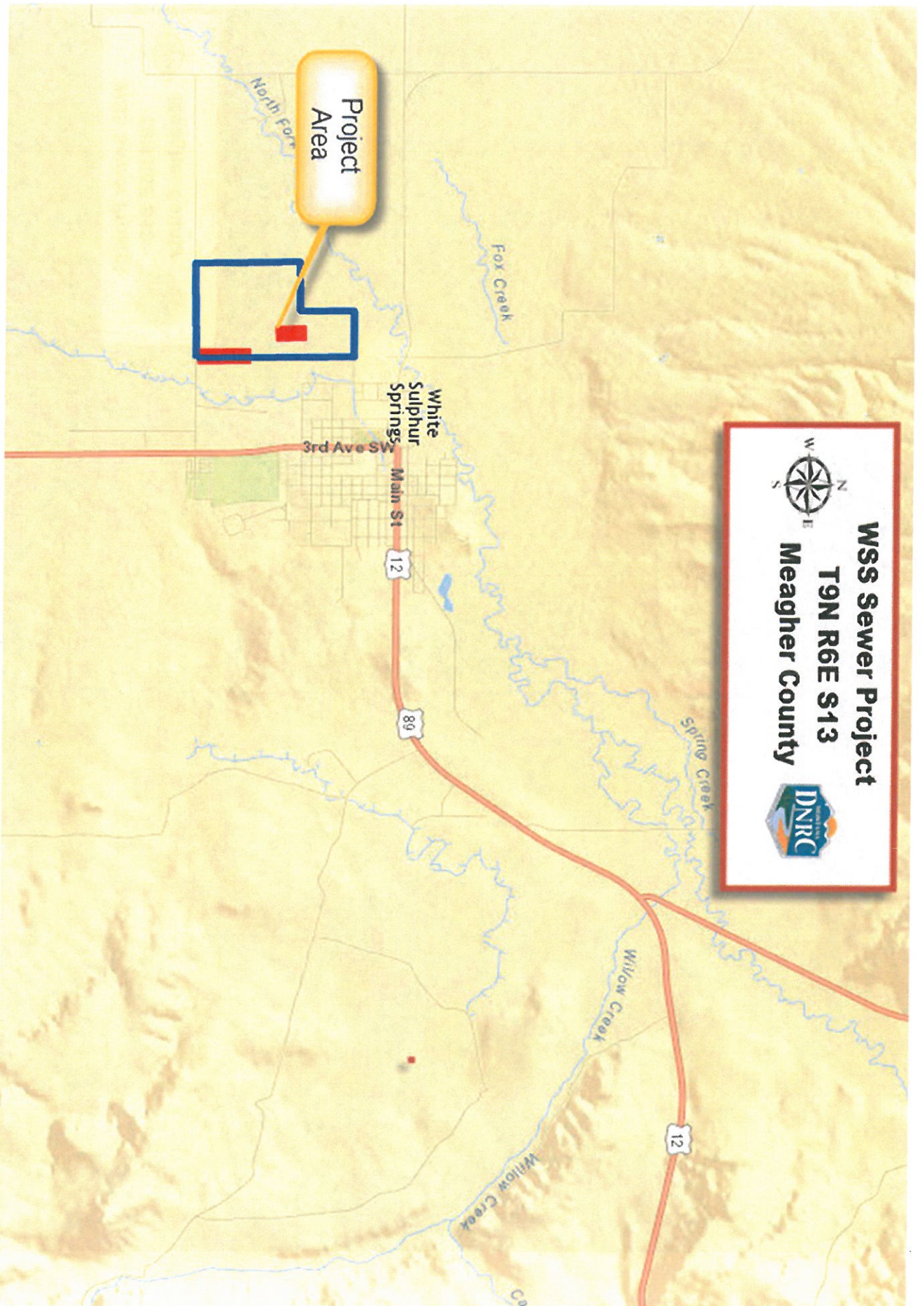
27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

☐ EIS
 ☐ More Detailed EA
 ☒ No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Martin Balukas
	Title: Trust Land Program Manager
Signature:	Date: 4/5/17



WSS Sewer Project
T9N R6E S13
Meagher County





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Meagher County



Temp.
Route

Temp.
Route

